

Global Issues Part 2

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Preacher: Dr. Olav Slaymaker

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you for moving forward here. I'd like to start by praying with you Psalm 148 to try to get over that sense of depression that some may have continued to have over the week.

O praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights. Praise him, all ye angels of his. Praise him, all his host. Praise him, sun and moon.

Praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, all ye heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He hath made them fast forever and ever. He hath given them a law which shall not be broken. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps.

[1 : 37] Fire and hail, snow and vapor, wind and storm fulfilling his word. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and feathered fowls, kings of the earth and all peoples.

Princes and all judges of the world. Young men and maidens together, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name only is excellent, and his glory above heaven and earth.

He shall exalt the horn of his people. All his saints shall praise him, even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth him. Now what that psalm tells us is that the meta-narrative that we introduced last time is a source of optimism and of strength.

You will recall that we looked at some of the elements of that big picture from the Christian point of view. That even if the situation looks troublesome from the point of view of population, from the point of view of environment, from the point of view of people's attitudes, and from the point of view of the instantaneity of communications and of ideas around the earth, that the meta-narrative says, have confidence, that God is in charge, and that he will be the final arbiter of the outcome.

So the meta-narrative, which I'm sorry to report, Dr. Packer, no one in the room last time remembered the definition, but the meta-narrative or the big picture from a Christian perspective is very different than the big picture from a secular perspective.

[3 : 40] And some Christians in the past, and I guess in the present also, have come to the conclusion that they therefore don't really need to look into the details inside it, because we know that God is in control.

And that, I think, is an unfortunate conclusion. It seems to me that we have a great responsibility to examine the extent to which we are experiencing and reinforcing the praise of the Lord, not only from his people, but from the environment, and from the state of the world, to the extent that it is possible for us to pray and to think about and be involved in such matters.

So let me just go back to what was the essential summary of the first two points that I tried to make last time.

The population growth, absolute amount and uneven distribution, and global environmental change, accelerating rate and intensity, these are the two important issues which are summarized by this map of the effects of population growth and intensity of impact by agricultural activity, primarily, throughout the whole of the Mississippi River Basin, which occupies half of the United States, which has allowed growth and standards of living unheard of in previous generations, to the detriment of the environment immediately off the coast of the Mississippi Delta.

The death of animal and fish life off this coast has been continuously deteriorating, continuously deteriorating problem over the period since the intensive application of nitrate and phosphates to the agricultural land of the United States.

[6 : 05] So that population growth, which was enabled by the generation of artificial nitrate synthesis, has in itself had a kickback effect on the environment, such that not only is the environment itself ruined, but of course fish life and resources associated with it and the attempts to exploit the carbon resources under that surface have been affected by this impact.

So that is just a microcosm of the global issue of the way in which population growth and its impact and has in turn generated environmental change, which is in turn kicking back and causing problems.

That was the emphasis last time. Today I want to add to that the two further questions and you saw this one last time as well, but I want to major on this one in a more direct way.

The two features, in addition to the population problem and the environmental change problem, have to do with our attitudes to environment as a society and also the effects of the instantaneous flow of information across the globe.

And if you have your handout here, you'll see that this is items C and D, C at the bottom of page one and D at the middle of page two.

[8 : 04] Does everyone have one of these? Hand up. It should be at the back. So the third of these problems from secular perspective is the intensely conflicting views in our society on society environment relations.

Three main approaches, which can be multiplied of course in many detail, but three main approaches take an ecocentric, a technocentric, and an anthropocentric approach.

First of all, the ecocentric one, in which the secular world is very conscious of the fact that nature's goods and services, what we would call God's provision, are taken too much for granted, and we need to recognize the interdependence of human beings and other living organisms.

And that, in various guises, is an ecocentric perspective on our relationship to the environment. The second approach, which is, I suppose, the dominant approach in our own North American society, is that we use technological substitutes.

and this example of the Mississippi, pardon me, the agricultural intensification of the Mississippi Basin is an example where we're using technological substitutes by artificially creating nitrates, with the assumption that nature and people are independent of one another.

[10 : 16] In other words, that we can put in technological fixes without having any long-term downstream negative effects. And this is the dominant view with respect to so much of our activity in terms of resource exploitation, in terms of the use of technology in a completely dominant way.

You may have been interested in the situation in Alberta with respect to the oil sands, which promises to be the source of Canada's greatness from an economic perspective over the next few decades.

I don't know whether you have seen the pictures of the landscape that is being modified by that attempt to use the oil sands. It's a massive disruption of that environment, which at the moment is seen purely as an aesthetic problem.

But of course, in the long term, the disturbance of the ecosystem and the wildlife and the fish life and so on are substantial.

Now, a hard-headed economist would say there's no comparison between the riches and wealth that we will be generating from the tar sands by comparison with the few fish and animals that are disturbed.

[11 : 56] But the issue is how do we actually value not only the fish and the animal life, but also the indigenous people who are affected by this, and also the way in which our own continuing dependence upon hydrocarbon deposits is encouraged by this particular approach.

But anyway, what I'm giving you is just an example, which is likely to be a very dominant example over the next few decades, is just one of the many examples in our society where we assume that a technological fix will not have any downstream negative impact.

And whereas I would fully acknowledge the immediate value of many of the technological fixes, it's very unusual for them not to have any downstream negative impacts.

And the third approach, which I guess is most common in many parts of the world also, is the anthropocentric approach, which I've summarized as eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we will all be dead.

This is an approach to the environment. I see that we have some support in the back of the room for this approach. It contrasts, in my view, very strongly with the sense of the need to be a steward of the resources that God has given us.

[13 : 34] And so it seems to me that under this topic of attitudes to the environment, it's very important for us to think how a Christian perspective contrasts with each one of these three approaches.

And it seems to me that the missing ingredient is the theocentric approach. Who is at the center of things? Job chapter 42 makes it clear that people are only a part of his creation and that God is at the center.

What holds the world together? All things subsist in Christ. In him all things hold together. And how should we think of the earth?

The anthropocentric is a mistake there. Technocentric rather than biocentric. Anthropocentric, technocentric, and ecocentric approaches are inadequate in a theocentric world.

Care for the earth is an integral feature of authentic Christian discipleship. And I hesitate to refer to a person whose name is Boomer Prediger, but that's what his name is.

[14 : 47] And it's a lovely book, and I can really recommend it to you, but I think we have to call it BP. BP. I don't undercut the first part of my talk by saying that.

BP has given us five ways in which the church has seemingly fallen down on the task of developing a theocentric view of our global issues.

And I'll just recap them here. You can read these for yourselves. We've got the manager of the Regent bookstore in our midst, and he will be delighted to sell you one of these, I'm sure.

For the Beauty of the Earth by BP. He gives five factors that have been a problem for us as a Christian community.

First, he says, the church is captive to modern Western culture. What that means is that you and I have the assumption in common with the secular society that God can be severed from his creation.

[16 : 21] That we can subject the creation to humanity's arrogant and unrestrained power. Our actual theology very often has been deistic, he says.

We affirm that God exists and that God creates but denies that God is in any meaningful way really related to the created order.

And again, it's similar to the technocentric view that I mentioned a few minutes ago that nature is autonomous, operating like a self-sustaining machine.

And that's the first concern that he mentions. second, he says, the church has accepted the anthropocentrism of modernity. That's the item three, the anthropocentric view of modernism.

We've placed humanity at the center of purpose and meaning in the universe. having banished or at least pacified God and thus rendered God harmless, we have enthroned ourselves at the center of things.

[17 : 49] That's the second problem. Thirdly, we in Western culture have made technology into a God culture. He recites the examples of Bhopal in India, Chernobyl in the Ukraine, the Exxon Valdez in Alaska, and so on, which are all extraordinarily disastrous events.

The fourth concern, he says, is that the church has forgotten creation. And that's again why I wanted to recap Psalm 148 in our presence.

An interesting comment he makes, the Western church's modern theology has fought between being personalized or politicized. That is to say, highly personalized and individualized or politicized, highly political and state and nation oriented.

And largely has forgotten the theology of creation as its starting point. Well, you'll realize these are vast generalizations and I'm sure there's no one in this room who suffers from these misunderstandings, but it's a very clear to me summary.

And finally, he is suggesting the fifth and final reason is the hubris of the Western church. That is, the Western church has been theologically arrogant and inattentive as well as condescending toward non-Western Christian perspectives.

[19 : 37] Now here we can talk with some optimism. Our relations with Malawi, for example, indicate the profound respect that we have for the church in the third world.

Our knowledge of the fact that the largest group of evangelical Christians in the world is in the Anglican communion in Nigeria and is an area for which we have been learning, from which we have been learning a great deal recently.

But isn't it the case, as one observes, the attitude with which the Anglican church has been approaching the third world recently that we have demonstrated hubris.

And if we don't know what hubris is, pride towards the developments in the third world. And not many of us have come to an awareness or come to a sense of the solidarity that we need to have with the third world and its problems.

Which brings me to the map which you've been looking at for a long time and wondering why I was introducing it. this grant commission that met in 1980 was concerned to identify the gap between rich and poor nations.

[21 : 16] And of course it defines a north which is the prosperous and a south which is the sub-saharan Africa and a series of regions with intermediate degrees of poverty.

It's a vast overgeneralization but from our perspective looking at Christian attitudes to the global circumstance it surely has to be a source of concern that there are such enormous disparities in wealth and well-being in our world.

I'm not suggesting that we immediately can resolve this but it seems to me that it is quite extraordinary that this kind of situation has not only deteriorated since 1980 from the point of view of poverty but it is also vastly improved from the point of view of wealth.

That is to say that the gap between the north and the extremist parts of the south has increased in the last 20 years to such a point that the disparities are greater.

And it seems to me that therefore the whole necessity for reducing our textocentric, anthropocentric, and ecocentric perspective under the theocentric perspective is absolutely critical.

[23 : 11] And what is the theocentric perspective or is a theocentric perspective in relation to the south-north or north-south divide? Well, it seems to me that the gap between Psalm 148 and the reality of this situation is in part a function of the attitudes between or to society and environment relations.

our attitude is that when we have excess wastes, whether they are chemical, biochemical, radioactive, or other, we ship them off to a third world country.

The third world country is pleased to receive these wastes because we pay them for the wastes. They are allowed to dispose of them on their land or in their seas immediately adjacent to them.

There's a whole series of issues associated with international trade and tariffs which specifically are loaded against the third world and particularly loaded against the third world environment in the sense that out of sight is out of mind and therefore we are in a sense by our attitude to the environment exacerbating this north-south divide problem.

Now I know that some of you will say you're oversimplifying and in a sense I am. In the short time available there are far more factors than those that I'm able to discuss at this point.

[24 : 55] But there is a sense in which our attitude to the third world environment is reinforcing this deep gap between the wealthy and the poor of the world.

As mentioned we're doing our bit in relation to Malawi and we're increasingly respectful of third world Christian efforts but it seems to me we have a considerable way to go before we do a better job.

So I would commend to your careful and prayerful reading this book by BP. It's in my sense it's one of the most thoughtful Christian statements about this whole issue of attitudes to the environment and how we can do better.

The final topic which for many of you is the only or the most central issue in globalization is the issue of the rapidity and intensity of information flow which has become such a feature of our contemporary society.

Let me show a couple of maps which I hope will well you can't really see them very well but the top map is a map of political trouble spots in the modern world and another map is the environmental trouble spots of the modern world.

[26 : 35] What does this have to do with information flow? Well, the fact is that there is rather a high correlation between places which we read about every day in the newspaper, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Madagascar, Haiti, Solomon Islands and so on which are political trouble spots.

We also read in the environmental news of environmental problems in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and so on.

Now, there's a little bit of a sleight of hand here. Of course, there are other places with environmental problems but the fact is that there is a high level of correlation between political and environmental trouble spots.

And it is this aspect which our friend Samuel Huntington took up in his book *The Clash of Civilizations* in a book that was published in 1997 in which he suggested that the clash of civilizations would be compounded from this correlation between political and environmental trouble spots.

And he proceeded to interpret this in relation to what he called the Clash of Civilizations Civilizations and identified eight or nine civilizations which are increasingly realizing their identity increasingly operating as what he called independent tectonic plates in the world.

[28 : 41] he says the interaction of these nine or so civilizations is a far more important phenomenon in the coming decades than the homogenization that is being achieved by economic trends.

most of the literature that you might read in relation to the instantaneity and intensity of information flow and of ideas and economic development and so on emphasizes the trend towards making this one world under one system governed by the international large industrial enterprises and groups.

Samuel Huntington again from a secular perspective says people's values people's ideas what people hold to be important are far more important than the economic homogenization that is occurring around us.

He says and again I quote as an idea which was roundly criticized when it appeared in 1997. All the experts in the political science world said Samuel Huntington was talking nonsense.

He said the biggest conflicts and the biggest problems over the next little while will result from those areas in which these civilizations are rubbing shoulders and that the differences between these civilizations are likely to increase rather than decrease over time because the values that they hold inside their own cultures and in particular their religious convictions are in the long term likely to be far more effective than the homogenization of the economies.

[30 : 52] No one can debate this and clearly he's not the only secular voice on this matter. He's been hotly criticized for regarding religion and spirituality and values as being the issue of the 21st century.

But for me it's a very interesting hypothesis and evidence is building up where the zones of conflict are most intense would seem to coincide quite closely with these zones of interaction between for example the world of Islam the world of Buddhism there's a whole series of worlds that are identified in this talks about the Japanese the Buddhist the Orthodox the Hindu the Sinic China the Islamic the African as if it were a single African civilization Latin American and Western she calls the world of civilizations in this world of civilizations he suggests essentially a series of of units which are rubbing shoulders with each other analogous to the tectonic plates and that we are likely to see increasing political as well as environmental difficulties in those locations where the civilizations interact now whatever the truth of this may be and

I say whatever the truth may be because we don't know and I mentioned before that in the context of these secular theories we don't have a clear guiding principle as to how things are developing nevertheless what is absolutely evident is that associated with these flows of information of ideas of inventions flows of cultures values flows of art music literature and institutions of governance this whole body of tendencies in our contemporary society all of these are impinging on us in a way that has never been the case in previous generations so that as Christians evaluating the effects of globalization and looking at the effects of the rapidity and intensity of information flow we need to think not only of the future clash of civilizations but the way in which the discrepancies between standards of living are increasing in this last paragraph

I've made a note about the huge and rapid improvement in the economic standard of living 250 million Chinese citizens contrasted with the continuing decline in the quality of life of the other 1 billion citizens of China we need to think of the way in which we involuntarily participate in the promotion of herbicides and pesticides in illiterate societies we need to think about the way in which we involuntarily participate in the supply of weapons to rights abusive regimes a lot of the difficulties or the proximate difficulties in Iraq have to do with the way in which the involvement of western nations with Iraq on a commercial basis have influenced the response of the

Iraqi people to attempts to help them we need to think of the threat of global contagious disease we need to think of the use of import quotas giving small benefit to the north but huge costs to the south we need to think of the massive rates of human migration apparently within the last couple of years the number of environmental refugees has become larger than the number of refugees from war by that I mean from famine stricken areas from flood stricken areas there's been more disruption of the movement of people than from violent conflict and in that context you may have read a recent curious report from the human security center at UBC in which they documented the decline in violence over the last decade that is to say decline in violence in terms of the number of wars actively documented so that the at the same time has been somewhat significant decline in the number of active conflicts there have been increases in the rates of human migration and the same time of course terrorism has become increasingly prevalent then there's a question which we need to think carefully about on the growth of fundamentalisms not only fundamentalisms in Islam but also fundamentalisms in the context of the Christian community how some of the knee-jerk responses of not only the president of

[37:11] Iran but also the president of a country to the south of us characterize some of the fundamentalist problems that's to say classifying the world in ways that are not I think terribly helpful and finally it seems to me that this new sense of vulnerability that derives from the rapidity and intensity of information flow not only in terms of all these horrible things that are happening in the global scene but the new sense of vulnerability which has to do with the way in which we are exposed to the secular perspectives in a much more upfront way than we are exposed to them as a Christian community and it's one of my concerns and some of you will be I'm sure happy to correct me on this it's one of my concerns that we are not sufficiently placarding these issues as a community of

Christians because well as I say some have taken this view they have the confidence that God is in control and that's great in the long run but in the short run it seems to me that we have this obligation to address these issues in a meaningful and careful way so the case study of Mr.

Huntington is an interesting one from my point of view because this is a secular discussion which seems to me to be quite parallel in many ways to the Christian perspective on the long-term future of our society it's a it's a person who takes values and religion seriously and says this is the driving force in the world and he says that we need to beware and to be conscious of the way in which our global issues affect our relations with other religious communities and this is a therefore a challenging kind of a book well what can Christians do about global issues let me say just a few more things before I do that I'd like you to reflect on some of these images this is from a Saudi

Arabian airlines advertisement and it addresses the issue of the instantaneity of connection between different parts of the world here's Riyadh capital city of Saudi Arabia which is connected directly with London Paris New York in this diagram here's the interconnectedness of our global society and here's the ease with which ideas travel across the face of the globe God is in control how do we encourage how do we respond to the way in which our societies are interacting in this way in this case it's not just a societal thing of course it's a major economic political and religious issue let me also show you this image

Borobudur is a Buddhist temple in Java and is cheek by jowl just about 50 kilometers away it's a major Hindu temple and in Java the interaction of these two religions is overwhelmingly greater than the interaction between those religions and Christianity as you know there have been significant examples of persecution Christians in Java but the major influences well particularly Islam now of course but also these historical relics which are important in the context of that country provide a very significant sense of conflict within the community of

[42:17] Java if you ever have the chance to go to Yogyakarta which is a city in the southeastern part of Java you will see these religious symbols of Hinduism and Buddhism alongside of the sound of the call to prayer of the Islam community and you'll see the dominance of these religious perspectives in that context and it's a reflection of the way in which global issues are expressed in the religious life of this country now finally I should just give you a summary of some of the issues here and then go to the conclusions over the last decades globalization has accelerated as has also tribalism that is to say an attempt to deal with the globe as a unit attempts to create global governance mechanisms have accelerated at the same time as the increased intensity of feeling around smaller communities such as expressed by tribalism or in some cases one would express it as fundamentalism the contrasts between the global south and the global north have increased global changes both biophysical and socioeconomic have accelerated population pressure has increased as have natural happens land allocation and claims by indigenous peoples have become more urgent ecological vulnerability has increased that's the

Jared Diamond thesis biodiversity and cultural diversity have to a certain extent been reduced human insecurity has increased and the mutual interdependence of south and north of society and nature and of society with other societies has increased this whole complex of changes poses some important questions for us as Christians and I'm sure you can think of other items for the list so what can Christians do about global issues we can pray we must pray but it seems to be that we must pray on the basis of informed intelligence there is no excuse any longer for lack of information the problem is too much information so we need to pray for discretion in our ability to discern what are the critical issues we have the responsibility to be caretakers of the earth and in that responsibility we have local responsibilities which in the long term will have significant global implications some of you have been asking me about questions of whether we are making progress or whether we are falling back my own view is that we are making progress as a society and also as a

Christian community in being caretakers of the earth with respect to such things as the way in which we deal with our domestic garbage for example this is an example of caretaking being an evidence of improvement in our sense of the obligation that we have to take care of the earth but on the other hand the example I quoted of the way in which we dispose of our larger waste and our chemical and toxic wastes to the third world this is the opposite of being caretakers of the earth this to me is then a contradictory trend our local sense of responsibility has increased and our global sense of responsibility seems not to be improved thirdly we should express solidarity with

Christians in the south and I just quote the Malawi project which we've heard about from Don Curry and we'll hear more about in due course in what respect should be expressed solidarity with Christians in the south well of course in terms of their own local responsibilities as Christians but also with respect to the way in which they are themselves caretakers of the earth also the way in which there is a mutual obligation one to the other as between ourselves and them as indeed between ourselves and God and they and God there's this sense of the interdependence of ourselves of Christians in the south you have a few more controversial suggestions they are personal convictions of mine that we should question and if necessary oppose conversion of land to purely consumptive use this doesn't sit too well with the real estate profession but it doesn't say that one necessarily opposes such development but it says that we should question the way in which land is converted

I think I mentioned last time that every time we go to inspect our grandchildren we are impressed by the way in which the hillside in Fort Moody is being raped it's not too strong a word there are reduced constraints on the conversion of land to purely consumptive use and it seems to me we have a responsibility to oppose such removal of constraints there need to be careful considerations in each case of alternate ways in which the land is to be used the same time we should encourage third world development so you see we go from local to global in an iterative way here one of the reasons for encouraging third world development is that it is a way of reducing the rate of population growth in those areas which can least afford to grow as rapidly as they're growing at the moment but that would seem to be one factor in many there are so many other reasons why one might encourage the closing of the gap between third and third world and first world so called the reduction in the gap would seem to lead to a greater opportunity for reduction in the sense of vulnerability it's far more likely would seem to me that such a development would produce harmony and reduction in the sense of vulnerability than fighting wars and exporting ammunition to Iraq and other places and then finally a little list to encourage you again to look at

[51 : 24] Sir John Horton's chapters eight and nine why should we be concerned and weighing the uncertainties in his book called global warming the complete briefing because what he is working with is the same question of balance that I'm trying to communicate here to John as a confessing Christian as deeply involved in the whole global warming debate not only deeply involved he is the key individual as chair of that intergovernmental panel on climate change and what he discusses is how he doesn't actually express it in very explicit Christian terms in those chapters but you can tell from his sense of the concern about being caretakers of the earth he talks in those terms how the Christian obligation to deal as carefully as possible with this whole issue of environmental deterioration so this then is a very rapid survey of what

I see as the four major elements in the secularists view of global issues the four issues are population growth global environmental change attitudes to society and environment relations and the rapidity and intensity of information flow as Christians we have a meta-narrative which subsumes this whole process and this whole set of dilemmas but in the meantime we live here as those who are grateful to God for placing us in this extraordinarily privileged world and this unusually privileged society called St.

John's it seems to me that what we are doing at St. John's is extraordinarily progressive in terms of concern for the salvation of souls there's no ambiguity about the personal challenge that is placed before us every Sunday as individuals and our responsibility to respond to the calling of God as individuals and the responsibilities we have towards our friends in the overall scheme of the salvation of humanity this seems to me to be up front and very difficult for us to deny that St.

John's is doing a good job in that respect on the other side it seems to me we are not doing as good a job and I'm not wanting to be arrogant here humility has to be the tone in which one makes these comments because nobody has the answers to the variety of these pressing problems but it does seem to me that we do need to face more directly the responsibilities that we have while we are in this veil of tears for a short period of time to note that things are deteriorating in a variety of ways we also need to note that for some people things are improving very much but that we have this call to praise to praise God not just in our individual lives but also in our community life and as members of a global community and I put that out for discussion and if

I've offended some or if I've given a very wrong impression of some of these issues I'll be happy to be corrected and I thank you for your patience thank you well we won't interpret this you say in the wrong way yes well thank you for those comments I think that's a very interesting and important point.

[56 : 27] I think it's also important to point out that large industrial operations have been changing and that there's a considerable portfolio in many cases.

I don't know the case of Monsanto, but certainly a number of major companies have really changed their perspective on this.

So it's not all bad. Your case is an important one. As you know, the issue of population control is a very vexed one.

And there has been no progress, quotes, in the science of population control primarily because of the strong position of their own Catholic Church in simply saying any kind of artificial control of the birth process is wrong.

No, no, no, no, no, no, I don't do that. That's too simple.

[57 : 39] I attribute the rapidity of the growth to the possibility of using artificial nitrates to intensify the productivity so that you've got a technological fix, which has also produced downstream effects.

But the nature of this observation is that if you look at the relation between education and family size, there is simply a high negative correlation between the level of education and the size of the family so that there is a likely reduction in the rate of population growth associated with development of opportunities, of alternate opportunities for people in third world countries.

So that's the point of that statement. Yes, sir. It's a profound question. Did everyone hear it? P.S. Eliot in 1937 used the term totalitarian democracy.

And this rings a bell for us today. In the sense that if one reviews the nature of the debate surrounding the last election, from my perspective at least, the word environment and the word international obligation was absent from the debate.

It was not seen to be, these were not seen to be issues that would get votes. Which presumably plugs into a strain, a very strong strain of North American isolationism, which has been growing over the last decade and is very difficult to reverse.

[59 : 43] And the question is, what can we do about that? Well, there is a really limited range of things we can do. The first one is to pray about it.

And the second one would be to take responsible action at the local level so that in the longer term this success of local action can be translated into national and international action.

But it seems to me this is not quite on this particular question, but it seems to me very, very interesting when one looks at the Book of Common Prayer or at the Bible or both the way in which there is a constant interplay between the personal and the local and the global.

communion service really emphasizes that. But we go from holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth it's full of your glory to the personal commitment as we receive the bread and the wine at the hands of the minister and reflect on the personal salvation which has been wrought for each one of us.

And so there's a constant interplay backwards and forwards. And we in a secular society it seems to me at any one time we are either all gung-ho on global things or all gung-ho on our pocketbooks as individuals.

[61 : 28] And we seem to have difficulty in marrying these two scales of activity. So my summary of the last election campaign was that it was entirely controlled by greed on a personal level.

Now I stand correction. But there was not an element of international or global thinking. as far as I could make out in that election.

And yet on another occasion, let's say go back to Lester Pearson's time, it was the global. And we were marching towards a future of harmony and of great global unity.

And the personal obligation part I'm sure the greed was still there but the emphasis was not in that same sense on the personal.

So it seems to me that it's the genius of the Christian faith that we have to consider the full range of scales from local to global and personal particularly personal and I'm reminded of the book that I'm reading by John Knoll on the foundations of evangelicalism.

[62 : 54] It makes a very interesting point about the relationship between this personal and local and global suggesting that it was the time of Jonathan Edwards and Whitfield and the Wesleys which saw this in the round in a way which had not previously been seen.

Particularly Jonathan Edwards case was a well-developed theological position and Dr. Bagel would be able to elaborate on this point but I found that quite impressive and it seems to me that it's something that challenges us to see what we can do in relation to bringing our personal faith in line with the global dimensions of our faith.

I think I may have mentioned before when I was told that I was going to be living in North America I was advised to learn to waste. I was told I would be having a wonderful time in North America but I was poorly prepared because I had not learned how to waste.

That was in the 1960s. So we have become considerably more wasteful in many ways since that time but I do see that there is an increasing awareness just as your question implies that people are considering the kind of vehicle that they drive the kind of uses to which they make where you're getting to a really tricky point aren't you?

If we stood up in church next Sunday and said we should all try to adopt the lifestyle of Hudson Taylor do you think we would get a good buy-in at St.

[64 : 55] John's? It's a very important point it's a very serious point I don't know how one could possibly imagine getting back to that point but the fact is that a very small reduction in our impact on the environment as individuals by the way in which we use our cars or the way in which we even our diet even the modification of our diet you know it can make substantial change how many of you did google the ecological footprint last week only one person gets an A in this class you you are responsible for six planets seven point two planets well don't don't take the numbers too literally but what it does mean but what it does mean is that we are well above the global average in the way in which we use our environment and the impact is shocking as you say for those for those of you who missed the opportunity please take the opportunity it's free of charge google ecological footprint and you will discover what your stress on the land and water and air is in a summary form and then there's a calculation at the end of your little sum which shows you how many planets would be needed to support your lifestyle or my lifestyle if all the population of the world were to adopt the same lifestyle as ourselves and so

Rowena is saying she found seven planets is the approximate requirement and we don't have seven planets and it seems to me that it's a very good model for us as Christians well this is the \$64,000 question are you offering me another opportunity to stand up well I think that I'll just I'll show my hand and be the theoretical I suppose but it seems to me that we are terrified of the social gospel and rightly so there's been a history of migration away from quote essentials every time people have become unduly caught up with the social gospel but I don't understand why it has to be either or and it seems to me that a more balanced perspective which demonstrates that the individual must respond and the society is called upon as challenged by those who are committed to Christ and so

I think that that's a very mealy-mouthed heretical position maybe but I have the sense that we overdo the avoidance of the global issues and social issues because of the historical record which is almost always negative from the point of view of the gospel because people got caught up in the social gospel with its very many other demands I guess it may be that the politicians are right you can only you can only major on one thing in this life and if you try to do more than one thing you confuse the issue well I appreciate your your question I think it's a very good one my sense would be that I'm talking about eschatological things that no one is talking about the end of the whole show and we will be moved into a different arena and the earth will be brought to an end so that that then is not it seems to me an issue that we face in this interval as we wait for the end of the world so that those other passages from the

Noahician covenant and from psalm 148 and most other parts of the scripture we're looking at the way in which God through Christ upholds the universe and that they will not pass away until he says so and that the eschatological teaching is specifically so it's a one-off deal and I'm not sure whether this makes theological sense but I would have thought that would be the direction which one could reconcile those right can tell you canana